Kathryn Yost’s Appalachian Trail (AT) Presentation

Kathryn has an associate’s degree in baking and pastry, and a bachelor’s in restaurant management

General Information:

* AT runs through 14 states – Georgia (Springer Mountain) through Maine (Mount Katahdin)
* AT is 2,185.9 miles long
  + Mileage changes every year due to: floods – needing re-routes, switchbacks to avoid climbing straight up, and to preserve wildlife
* AT is 76 years old since 1st created
* 1st person to thru-hike is Earl Schaeffer from PA in 1948
* Fastest thru-hike was 46 days; was ran and people provided food and housing
* Average hike lasts 4-6 months, some take 7 months
* Kathryn hiked from 4/2-9/9, 2013
* Section hikers – people who hike small sections can take years to complete entire thru hike
* ¼ people who set off to thru hike actually finish
* 13,500 people have finished a thru hike thus far
* Highest point is Clingman’s Dome at 6,625 ft.
* Lowest point is at a zoo in NY at 124 ft.
* McAfee Knob is the most photographed spot
* Longest footbridge is across the James River in VA
* Pine Grove Furnace – true half way point with half gallon ice cream challenge
* Harper’s Ferry – half way to register and get picture taken

Kathryn’s planning:

* Planned for three months
* Needed a break from work and the real world
* Cost her $1,000 for equipment, and $3,000 on the trail (food, hostels, etc…)
* Think about: health insurance, physical conditioning, maps, food/water, first aid, weather, wildlife

AT Guide Book (ripped pages out to avoid carrying extra weight):

* Book that contained every bit of information one could need regarding the AT
  + Town maps, post offices, shelters, water, distances, mileage, elevation and terrain profile, fun facts

Equipment:

* Backpack – weighed 35 lbs. with every inside
  + Sleeping bag – synthetic; temperatures down to 20 degrees Farhenheit, with insert an additional 18 degrees
  + Food bag with rope – must be hung 12 feet up and 6 feet out to create a 90 degree angle from bears
    - Drop boxes – mailed food to pre-selected locations of post offices – put in extra ziploc bags so that food could be compacted
    - Packed food for 3-5 days
      * Poptarts, pb&j, pb&f, macaroni and cheese, couscous, rice packs, chili, pasta sides, bagels, oatmeal, crackers, cookies, soup mixes, chocolate, candy bars, hot chocolate, protein bars, honey buns, apple cider, protein bars
    - Burned up to 6,000 calories a day
      * Proteins and carbohydrates a must!
    - Vitamins were super important
  + Propane gas stove with cookin pot
    - Cleaned dishes by licking – need to be very careful due to bacteria
      * Norovirus, by not washing dishes, then became contagious and passed it on – caused diarrhea, vomiting, etc…
  + Sleeping pad
  + Water bladder – usually needed 2 gallons water per day
    - Filtered water with chlorine called aquamere, could have boiled or used iodine
    - Springs were the best way to get water because it comes directly from the mountain
    - In PA/NY/NJ, it’s hard to get water due to being up in high elevations
  + Clothing bag
  + Electronics bag
  + Camp shoes
  + Trekking poles
  + First aid kit

Shelters:

* Every 8-10 miles
* Usually can fit 6 people
* No doors
* Lean-to’s are a type of shelters that are curved and shaped differently

Huts:

* You must pay for these or work to stay
* Have running water or wells
* Have kitchens and tables

Hostels:

* Cheap
* Showers/bathrooms/bunks

Privy = outhouse

* Or dig 4-6 inches

Injuries: blisters, shin splints, knee tendinitis, heat exhaustion, stung by 2 hornets

Challenges:

* 100 miles without towns – carry 10 days worth of food
* worst weather in America
* crawling through tiny holes
* steep, slippery paths
* ford – walk through rivers

Wildlife: 11 blackbears, no moose, wild ponies, wild boar, river otter, beaver, copperhead, rattlesnake, lizards, ticks, mosquitoes, mice, poison ivy

Average miles hiked: 20 miles per day; highest was 26.5 miles; 3 miles per hour

Trail Days – Damascus

* freebies/giveaways
* hiking companies come to fix gear
* 3-5 day event
* great food

LNT guidelines

AT vocabulary:

* zero/nero – no hiking day or close to no hiking day
* SOBO/NOBO – south bound or north bound hiker
* Gorp – trail mix
* Trail magic – unexpected surprise
* Trail angel – person who gives trail magic
* Slackpacking – day pack
* Stealth camping – camping right on trail
* Cowboy camping – camping under stars, no tent
* Aquablazing – rafting instead of hiking for 100 miles
* Bounce box – drop box shipped to next location for free

Clothing: polyester – wicks away water

* 4 pair of shoes
* Different for spring/fall than summer

Shower/laundry:

* Special environmentally-friendly soap
* Baby wipes